

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 AID-20 OMB-01 IO-14 DRC-01 /164 W

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R 131344Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8612

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L NIAMEY 2740

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SA, NG

SUBJECT: SAUDI ARABIA-NIGER RELATIONS

1. SAUDI CHARGE AL RACHASCH, WHO HAS JUST RETURNED FROM SIX WEEKS OF CONSULTATION, HAVE ME FOLLOWING RUNDOWN AGUST 12 ON PRESENT STATE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN SAUDI ARABIA AND NIGER. THESE HAD BEEN CLOSE DURING DIORI REGIME WITH AL RACHASCH PERODICALLY PLUNKING DOWN MILLION DOLLAR GIFT FOR DIORI TO USE IN DROUGHT RELIEF, ETC., BUT RELATIONS HAD COOLED WHEN MILITARY OVERTHREW DIORI IN APRIL.

2. COMMENT: ONE OF PROBLEMS AL RACHASCH FACES WITH NEW GOVERNMENT IS HIS CLOSE OFFICIAL AND PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION WITH DIORI WHOM HE SAW FREQUENTLY AND WITH WHOM HE TRAVELLED AROUND COUNTRY. END COMMENT.

3. THINGS ARE NOW ON MEND BUT AL RACHASCH SAID IT TOOK CONSIDERABLE EFFORT TO OVERCOME SUSPICIONS OF HIS GOVERNMENT TOWARDS NEW NIGER REGIME. SAUDI RESERVATIONS  
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HAD CENTERED ON: A) FACT OF MILITARY COUP WHICH NOT

EXACTLY A POPULAR CONCEPT WITH FAISAL; B) BLOODSHED AND DEATH OF DIROI'S WIFE WHICH TAINTED NEW LEADERS; C). APPOINTMENT OF SEVERAL CHRISTIANS AS CABINET MINISTERS IN WHAT WAS SUPPOSEDLY STAUNCHLY ISLAMIC GOVERNMENT. THIS REPORTEDLY RAISED QUESTIONS IN JIDDA ABOUT NEW GOVERNMENT'S DEDICATION TO ISLAM AND ITS CREDENTIALS TO RECEIVE SAUDI SUPPORT AND AID; D) DECISION OF GON TO RECOGNIZE PRC WHICH MIGHT CONCEIVABLY BE PART OF THAT COMMUNIST-ZIONIST CONSPIRACY THAT TROUBLES FAISAL; AND E) NIGER'S APPARENT FLIRTATION WITH LUBYA.

4. AL RACHASCH SAID HE WORKED HARD TO OVERCOME THESE RESERVATIONS WHICH HE CONSIDERS UNREALISTIC. HE BELIEVES HE HAS CONVINCED JIDDA OF PRISIDENT KOUNTCHE'S BONA FIDES AS A STAUNCH MUSLIM LEADER. GON DECISION TO SEND DELEGATION LED BY FONMIN DJERMAKOYE TO SAUDI ARABIA TO PAY RESPECTS TO FAISAL WAS SMART MOVE AND ALSO HELPED TO IMPROVE ATMOSPHERE. FACT THAT FAISAL HAD RECEIVED FONMIN WAS EVIDENCE ENOUGH THAT NEW REGIME RESTORED TO SAUDI GOOD GRACES. THIS IN TURN COULD LEAD TO RENEWAL OF SAUDI AID TO NIGER INCLUDING POSSIBLE SUPPORT TO FINANCE DAM PRLJECT ON NIGER RIVER (SEPTTEL).HECK

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